

49 Types of verbs

Verbs can be described as main verbs or auxiliary verbs.
Main verbs describe actions, occurrences, or states of being.
Auxiliary verbs modify the meaning of main verbs.

See also:

Present perfect simple 11

Modal verbs 56

49.1 MAIN VERBS

Main verbs are the most important verbs in a sentence. They can describe actions or states, or they can be used to link a subject to a description.

"Play" is the main verb that describes an action.

I play tennis every Wednesday evening.



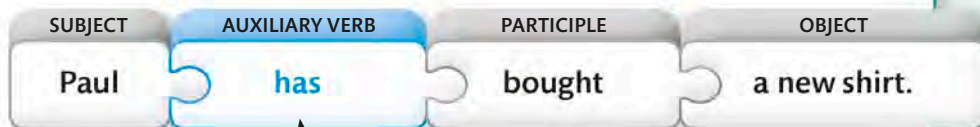
49.2 AUXILIARY VERBS

Auxiliary verbs are used with main verbs to modify their meaning. Auxiliary verbs are used very frequently to form different tenses.

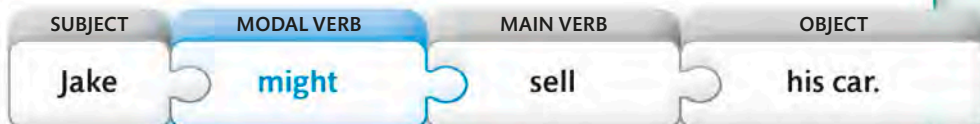
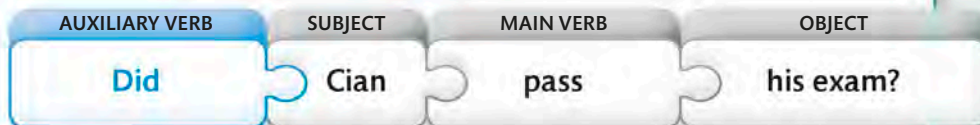
The auxiliary verb "do" is used to make questions and negatives of statements that don't already have an auxiliary verb.

Modal verbs are also auxiliary verbs. They modify the meaning of the main verb, expressing various notions such as possibility or obligation.

PRESENT PERFECT



"Has" is an auxiliary verb here. It's being used to form the present perfect.



49.3 LINKING VERBS

Linking verbs express a state of being or becoming. They link a subject to a complement, which renames or describes the subject.

The children **are** happy.

Subject → Complement



FURTHER EXAMPLES

Harry **looks** just like his father.



This **seems** like a lovely place to live.



Whatever you're cooking **smells** delicious!



After leaving school, she **became** a teacher.

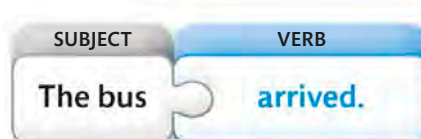


49.4 TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERBS

Some verbs take an object, which is a noun or phrase that receives the action of the verb. Verbs which take an object are known as **transitive verbs**.



Some verbs never take an object. These verbs are known as **intransitive verbs**.



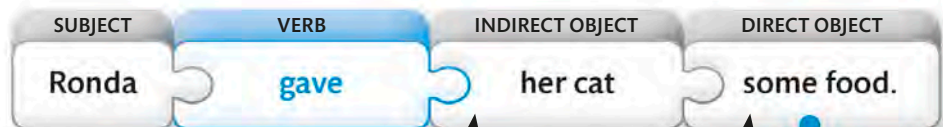
Some verbs can be either **transitive** or **intransitive**.



"Read" can be used with or without an object.



Some verbs can take **two objects**, a direct object and an indirect object.



The indirect object benefits from the action.

The direct object is what the verb "gave" refers to.



50 Action and state verbs

Verbs that describe actions or events are known as “action” or “dynamic” verbs, whereas those that describe states are known as “state” or “stative” verbs.

See also:

Present simple **1** Present continuous **4**

Past simple **7** Past continuous **10**

50.1 ACTION AND STATE VERBS

Action verbs usually describe what people or things do.
State verbs usually say how things are or how someone feels.

ACTION VERB

I { **read**
am reading } a book.

Action verbs can be used in simple forms and continuous forms.



STATE VERB

I **love** books.

State verbs are not usually used in the continuous form.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

Dominic **is eating** ice cream.



Gayle **is lying** on the couch.



I **don't eat** meat. I'm a vegetarian.



I **want** to go away somewhere.



She **has** two cats and a dog.



We've **known** each other for years.



COMMON MISTAKES USING STATE VERBS IN CONTINUOUS TENSES

Most state verbs cannot be used in continuous forms.



State verbs are only usually used in the simple form.

I **want** a new laptop. ✓

I **am wanting** a new laptop. ✗

State verbs can't usually be used in continuous forms.

50.2 USING STATE VERBS IN CONTINUOUS FORMS

Some verbs can be both action and state verbs. When these verbs are describing an action, they can be used in continuous forms.

ACTION



I **am thinking** about taking up fencing.

[Right now, I'm considering taking up fencing.]



The chef **was tasting** his soup.

[The chef is testing the soup's flavor.]



I'm **seeing** some friends for lunch tomorrow.

[I'm meeting some friends tomorrow.]

STATE



I **think** fencing is a great sport.

[In my opinion, fencing is a great sport.]



This soup **tasted** disgusting!

[The soup has a disgusting flavor.]



I **saw** some birds at the park yesterday.

[There were some birds at the park.]

A few state verbs can be used in continuous forms, keeping their stative meaning.

The use of a continuous form emphasizes a change, development, or temporary situation.

CONTINUOUS FORM



Are you **feeling** better today?
You **seemed** sick yesterday.



We're **sounding** much better than usual!



My leg **is** really **hurting** this morning.

SIMPLE FORM



How do you **feel** about modern art?



I wish they'd stop. they **sound** terrible!



My leg **hurts**. Maybe I should go to the doctor.

51 Infinitives and participles

Infinitives and participles are forms of verbs that are rarely used on their own, but are important when making other forms or constructions.

See also:

Present continuous 4

Present perfect simple 11

51.1 INFINITIVES

The infinitive is the simplest form of the verb. English verbs have two types of infinitive.

Sometimes the infinitive is formed with "to" plus the verb. This is sometimes known as a "full" or "to" infinitive.



When the infinitive is formed without "to," it is known as the base or simple form, or the bare infinitive.

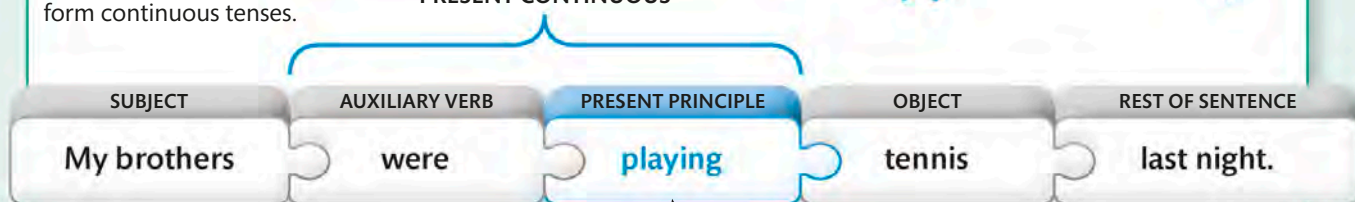


51.2 PRESENT PARTICIPLES AND GERUNDS

Present participles and gerunds are formed by adding "-ing" to the base form of the verb. They are spelled the same, but they perform different functions in a sentence.

Present participles are most commonly used with auxiliary verbs to form continuous tenses.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS



The present participle is being used to make the past continuous.

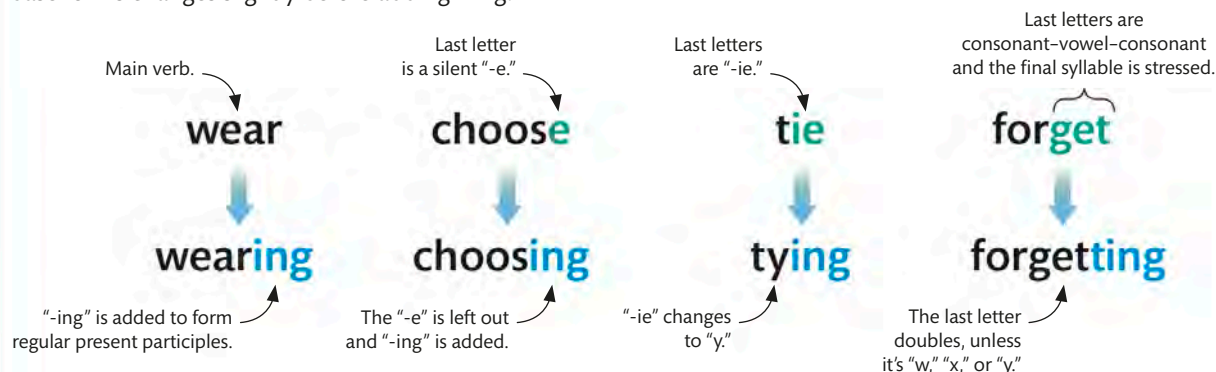
Gerunds are verbs that are used as nouns. They are sometimes known as verbal nouns.















"Playing" is a gerund here. Along with "tennis," it forms the subject of the sentence.

51.3 PRESENT PARTICIPLE AND GERUND SPELLING RULES

All present participles and gerunds are formed by adding “-ing” to the base form of the verb. The spelling of some base forms changes slightly before adding “-ing.”



FURTHER EXAMPLES

 <p>They're whispering to each other.</p> <p>The last letter is not doubled because “per” is not stressed.</p>	 <p>I'm enjoying my vacation.</p> <p>The last letter of the verb doesn't double if it's “y.”</p>
 <p>She's swimming in the ocean.</p> <p>The last letter is doubled because the pattern is consonant-vowel-consonant.</p>	 <p>He's making a cake.</p> <p>The “-e” is dropped from the verb.</p>
 <p>Connor went walking in the hills.</p>	 <p>Paul was told off for lying.</p>
 <p>Sarah loves riding her horse.</p>	 <p>The audience started clapping.</p>
 <p>Stop wasting so much paper!</p>	 <p>She started looking for a new job.</p>
 <p>The children were sitting on the floor.</p>	 <p>I'm choosing the new intern.</p>

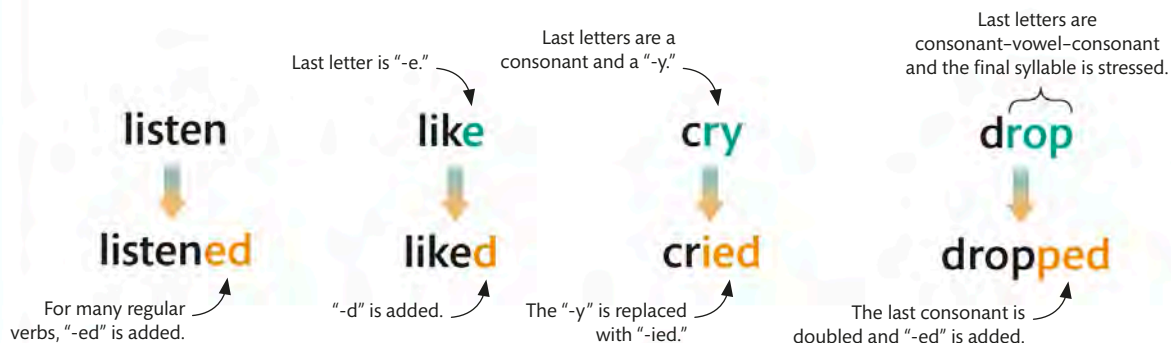
51.4 PAST PARTICIPLES

Past participles are used with auxiliary verbs to form perfect simple tenses, such as the present perfect simple.



51.5 SPELLING RULES FOR PAST PARTICIPLES

Regular past participles are made with the base form of the verb plus “-ed.” The spelling of some of these base forms changes a bit before adding “-ed.”



FURTHER EXAMPLES



I should have **covered** my work. Susanna has **copied** all my answers.



You haven't **passed** the exam this time, but at least you have **improved**.



I had **planned** to take the kids to the beach, but the weather's terrible.



By this time next week, I will have **finished** all of my assignments.



My boss has **asked** me to come in early again tomorrow. I'm so tired!

51.6 IRREGULAR PAST PARTICIPLES

Many verbs in English have irregular past participle forms. They often look quite different from their base form.

I **buy** new clothes every month.

I have just **bought** a new coat.

PAST PARTICIPLE



FURTHER EXAMPLES

BASE FORM	PAST PARTICIPLE	SAMPLE SENTENCE
be	been	You're late. Where have you been ?
become	become	This has become a real problem.
begin	begun	The class has already begun , so be quiet.
choose	chosen	Which subjects have you chosen to study?
do	done	My son has done a lot for the local community.
feel	felt	I haven't felt very well for over a week now.
know	known	Sonia would have known how to solve this problem.
find	found	The police have found the suspect.
forget	forgotten	My husband has forgotten our anniversary again.
go	gone	Helen has gone to Peru. She'll be back next week.
have	had	You look so different! Have you had a haircut?
make	made	I have made a cake for your birthday.
say	said	Jerry has said he'll be making a presentation.
see	seen	After this evening, I'll have seen this show six times.
sing	sung	This will be the first time she's sung in public.
tell	told	Has anyone told you the news? Kate's pregnant!
understand	understood	Has everyone understood the instructions?
write	written	I sent the email as soon as I had written it.

52 Verb patterns

Some verbs in English can only go with a gerund or an infinitive. Some verbs can go with either. These verbs often describe wishes, plans, or feelings.

See also:

Types of verbs 49

Infinitives and participles 51

52.1 VERBS WITH INFINITIVES

English uses the infinitive with "to" after certain verbs that describe someone's plans or wishes to do an activity.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

The infinitive doesn't change no matter what the tense of the main verb is.



I'm **waiting to play** badminton, but my friend is running late.

We **wanted to play** baseball yesterday, but it was raining.



My car broke down, but my friend **offered to drive** me home.

Ron **decided to learn** how to play the trombone.

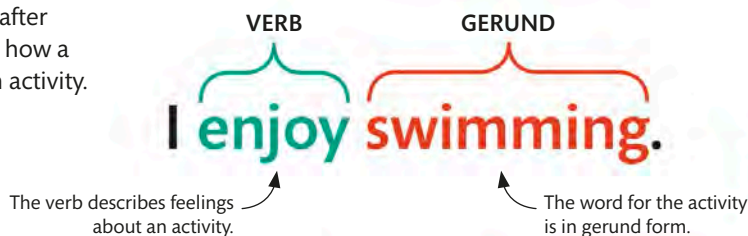


OTHER VERBS FOLLOWED BY INFINITIVES



52.2 VERBS WITH GERUNDS

English uses gerunds after certain verbs that say how a person feels about an activity.



FURTHER EXAMPLES



He doesn't **feel like** **playing** tennis tonight.



We really **dislike** **jogging**.
We're so out of shape!



Do you **miss** **skiing** now that summer is here?



I really **enjoy** **running** marathons.

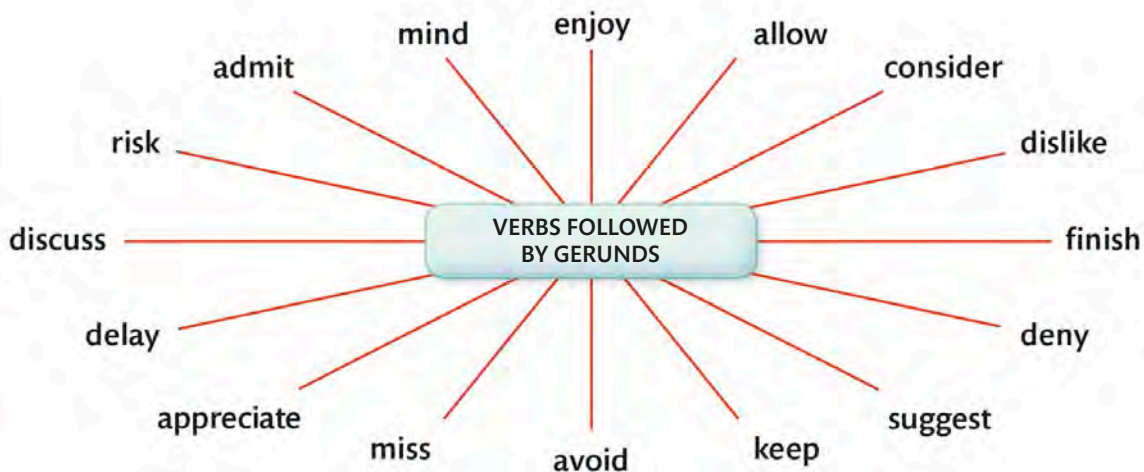


Would you **consider** **applying** for a promotion?



He doesn't **mind** **staying** late at work when he has to.

OTHER VERBS FOLLOWED BY GERUNDS



52.3 VERBS FOLLOWED BY INFINITIVE OR GERUND (NO CHANGE IN MEANING)

Some verbs can be followed by a gerund (an “-ing” form) or a “to” infinitive, with little or no change in meaning. You can often use both forms interchangeably.



I **like** { **to work**
working } in an open-plan office with a team.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

Emails are really awkward. I **prefer** { **to meet**
meeting } in person.



After a short stop, they **continued** { **to drive**
driving } toward the campsite.



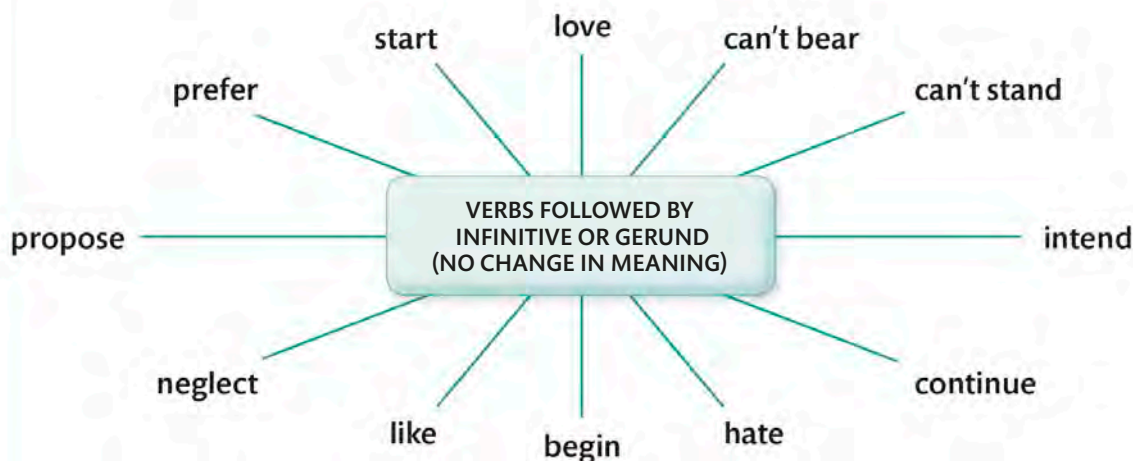
Once she had found a seat, she **began** { **to write**
writing } her essay.



Why isn't the bus here yet? I really **can't stand** { **to be**
being } late.



OTHER VERBS FOLLOWED BY INFINITIVE OR GERUND (NO CHANGE IN MEANING)



52.4 VERBS FOLLOWED BY INFINITIVE OR GERUND (CHANGE IN MEANING)

Some verbs change their meaning depending on the form of the verb that follows them. The infinitive is used to describe the purpose of the main verb's action. The gerund is often used to talk about the action which is happening around the same time as the main verb's action.



He **stopped to talk** to her
in the office before lunch.

[He was walking around the office, and he stopped walking so that he could talk to her.]



She **stopped talking** to him
and rushed to a meeting.

[She was talking to him, and she stopped talking in order to do something else.]

FURTHER EXAMPLES

VERB + INFINITIVE

She **forgot to send** the email,
so her team never received the update.

[She did not send the email.]

He **went on to write** the report
once the meeting had finished.

[He finished a meeting and then wrote the report.]

I **regret to tell** you the unhappy news.
Your flight has been delayed.

[I have to tell you unhappy news, and
I am sorry about this.]

Did you **remember to meet** David?
Your meeting was scheduled for today.

[You were supposed to meet David.
Did you remember to do that?]

VERB + GERUND

She **forgot sending** the email,
so she sent it a second time.

[She forgot that she had already sent the email.]

He **went on writing** the report all
evening. It took hours.

[He was writing the report, and continued to do so.]

I **regret telling** you the unhappy news.
I can see it has upset you.

[I wish I hadn't told you the unhappy news
because you are very upset now.]

Did you **remember meeting** David?
I'd forgotten that we had already met him.

[You had met David before.
Did you remember that?]

53 Verb patterns with objects

Some verbs, known as transitive verbs, have objects. When these verbs are followed by infinitives or gerunds, the object must come between the verb and the infinitive or gerund.

See also:

Types of verbs 49

Infinitives and participles 51

53.1 VERB WITH OBJECT AND INFINITIVE

Some verbs that are followed by an infinitive must also have an object before that infinitive.

VERB + OBJECT + INFINITIVE

My computer **allows me to work** on two screens at once.



HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT

VERB

OBJECT

INFINITIVE

REST OF SENTENCE

My computer

allows

me

to work

on two screens.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

Emma's brother **wants her to turn** down the television.



Giorgio **bought a new suit to wear** to his brother's wedding.



The building manager **will tell you to leave** the building if there's a fire.



Helena's mother **is always reminding her to do** the dishes.



Jonathan's teacher **expects him to do** better next time.



I've **asked my boyfriend to buy** some bread and milk on his way home.



⚠ COMMON MISTAKES VERB PATTERNS WITH "WANT"

When the verb "want" is followed by an object and an infinitive, it is not formed with a "that" clause.



I want him to come to the exhibit with me. ✓

I want that he comes to the exhibit with me. ✗

"Want" can't be followed by a "that" clause.

"Want" should be followed by an object and infinitive.

53.2 VERB + OBJECT + GERUND PATTERNS

Some verbs that are followed by a gerund must also have an object before that gerund.

VERB + OBJECT + GERUND

Hayley heard the boss interviewing the new secretary.



HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT

VERB

OBJECT

GERUND

REST OF SENTENCE

Hayley

heard

the boss

interviewing

the new secretary.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

I remember Arnold leaving the house at around 10 o'clock.



Jeremy spends every winter snowboarding in the Alps.



I really don't like anyone talking to me while I'm trying to study.

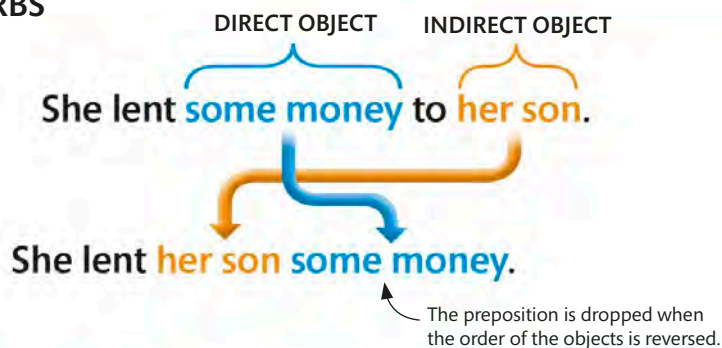


My sister loves science. I can see her becoming a doctor one day.



53.3 DOUBLE OBJECT VERBS

The direct object is the person or thing that an action happens to. The indirect object receives the same action. If the indirect object is the focus of the sentence, it comes after the direct object plus "to" or "for."



FURTHER EXAMPLES



Carolina sold { **her house** to **her younger brother**.
her younger brother **her house**.



Federico bought { **a car** for **his parents**.
his parents **a car**.

53.4 USING DOUBLE OBJECT VERBS WITH PRONOUNS

If the direct object is a pronoun, it must come before the indirect object.

She lent **it** to **her son**. ✓

She lent **her son** **it**. ✗

If the indirect object is a pronoun, it can come before or after the direct object.

She lent **some money** to **him**. ✓

She lent **him** **some money**. ✓

FURTHER EXAMPLES



Carolina sold { **it** to **her younger brother**.
it to **him**.
him **her house**.



Federico bought { **it** for **his parents**.
it for **them**.
them **a car**.

54 Verb patterns with prepositions

Some verb patterns include prepositions. Prepositions cannot be followed by infinitives, so these verb patterns only use gerunds.

See also:

Infinitives and participles 51

Verb patterns 52 Prepositions 105

54.1 VERB WITH PREPOSITION AND GERUND

If a preposition is followed by a verb, the verb must be a gerund (the “-ing” form).



Jasmine **decided against taking** the job.

Gerund

FURTHER EXAMPLES

Zac and Penny **are thinking about taking** a trip around the world.



My grandmother **is always worrying about forgetting** her house keys.



54.2 VERB WITH OBJECT, PREPOSITION, AND GERUND

If a verb takes an object, that object must come between the verb and the preposition.



He **congratulated her on winning** the competition.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

Hilda **stopped her dog from running** away.



I **asked my mother about buying** a new computer, but she said no.



55 Phrasal verbs

Some verbs in English have two or more words in them, and usually have a new meaning when they are used together. These are called phrasal verbs.

See also: Verb patterns with objects **53**
Prepositions **105** Separable phrasal verbs **R20**
Inseparable phrasal verbs **R21**

55.1 PHRASAL VERBS

Phrasal verbs have a verb plus one or more particles (prepositions or adverbs.)
The particle often changes the usual meaning of the verb.

PHRASAL VERB

I **get up** early every day.

Verb Particle



HOW TO FORM

The particle always comes after the verb.
The verb changes form to match the subject as usual. The particle never changes form.

The verb takes the third person "-s."

He **gets up**. ✓

He **get ups**. ✗
This is wrong. The particle should never change.

He **up gets**. ✗
This is wrong. The particle should come after the verb.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

You **work out** at the gym.



My cat sometimes **runs away**.



They don't **eat out** very often.



Do you always **turn up** late?



Questions are formed in the usual way.

Negatives are formed in the usual way.

He **doesn't go out** when he's tired.



She **chills out** in the evening.



We can **check into** the hotel now.



Do they **meet up** most weekends?



55.2 PHRASAL VERBS IN DIFFERENT TENSES

When phrasal verbs are used in different tenses, the verb changes, but the particle remains the same.



The particle never changes.

PRESENT SIMPLE

I **work out** every week.

PAST SIMPLE

I **worked out** yesterday.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

I **am working out** right now.

FUTURE WITH "WILL"

I **will work out** tomorrow.

FURTHER EXAMPLES



I **cleaned up** the kitchen last night.



Their car is always **breaking down**.



I think we're lost! We should have **looked up** the route.



She doesn't **dress up** very often.



You should **go over** your answers again.



I am **counting on** Rajiv to give the presentation next week.



I can't believe she **turned down** the job.



I **met up** with my friends last weekend.



I'm still **getting over** the flu.



When will they **grow up**?

55.3 SEPARABLE PHRASAL VERBS

If a phrasal verb has a direct object, it can sometimes go between the verb and the particle. Phrasal verbs that do this are called "separable" phrasal verbs.

He is picking up litter.

The object can go after the particle.

He is picking litter up.

The object can also go between the verb and the particle.

He is picking it up.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

I turned on the light.



I turned the light on.

Can you pick up that box?



Can you pick that box up?

You should throw away those old shoes.



You should throw those old shoes away.

I was annoyed because he woke up the baby.



I was annoyed because he woke her up.

I always fill up the water jug when it's empty.



I always fill it up when it's empty.

COMMON MISTAKES SEPARABLE PHRASAL VERBS

If the direct object of a separable phrasal verb is a pronoun, it must go between the verb and the particle.

Pronoun

He picked it up. ✓

The pronoun cannot go at the end of the sentence.

He picked up it. ✗

55.4 INSEPARABLE PHRASAL VERBS

Some phrasal verbs cannot be separated. The object must always come after the particle; it can never sit between the particle and the verb. This is true whether the object is a noun or a pronoun.



The verb and the particle must stay together.

We had to run to **get on** the train. ✓

We had to run to get the train **on**. ✗

This is wrong. The object can't sit between the verb and the particle.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

I need to **go over** my notes.



I **ran into** her at the supermarket.



Susan really **takes after** her father, they're very similar.



Drop by the house any time you like.



I've **come across** a new recipe.



He **sleeps in** most Saturdays.



I'm **taking care of** my sister's children tonight.



They will have to **do without** a trip this summer.



It's great to **hear from** you!



Get on this bus for the beach.



Caterpillars **turn into** butterflies.



Get off that bicycle if you don't have a helmet.



He has **fallen behind** the rest of the class this year.



I am **looking into** visiting somewhere warm.



55.5 THREE-WORD PHRASAL VERBS

Three-word phrasal verbs have a verb, a particle, and a preposition. The particle and preposition often change the usual meaning of the verb.



INTONATION

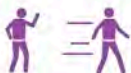
In spoken English, the stress is on the middle word of a three-word phrasal verb.

look up to **get along with** **look forward to**

FURTHER EXAMPLES



We have **run out of** coffee, so I'll get some more.



You're walking too fast, I can't **keep up with** you.



I must have dropped my keys when I was **getting out of** the car.

TIP

Most, but not all, three-word phrasal verbs are inseparable.

55.6 "GET BACK FROM"

"Get back from" can be separable or inseparable depending on the context.

When "get back from" means "to return from," it is always **inseparable**.

I **got back from** Italy yesterday.



When "get back from" means "to retrieve from" it is **separable**. The object must go between "get" and "back."

I need to **get** the lawn mower **back from** Tina.



55.7 NOUNS BASED ON PHRASAL VERBS

Some nouns are made from phrasal verbs, often formed by joining the verb and the particle together. When these words are spoken, the stress is usually on the verb.



The teacher asked me to **hand out** the exam papers.

Verb

Particle



The teacher gave us a **handout** for the lesson.

Stress is on the first syllable.

Sometimes, the noun is formed by putting the particle in front of the verb. In these cases, the spoken stress is usually on the particle.



Oh no! It was sunny and now it's **pouring down**.



We have a rainy season with daily **downpours**.

Stress is on the first syllable.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

The company is trying to **cut back** on staff expenses.



Not another **cutback**! The company must be in serious trouble.

It's a shame that he wants to **drop out** of school.



We've had a surprisingly high percentage of **dropouts** in the class.

We want to **get away** and go somewhere sunny this winter.



A trip to Australia sounds like a fabulous **getaway**.